



Written and illustrated by Thomas Myrman

Dedicated to my twin sister Anna
and her children Livia and William

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I died that day, I'm sure of it.

But Death told me a secret that most people spend their entire lives searching for.

I got a glimpse into my infinite potential.

Want to know how?

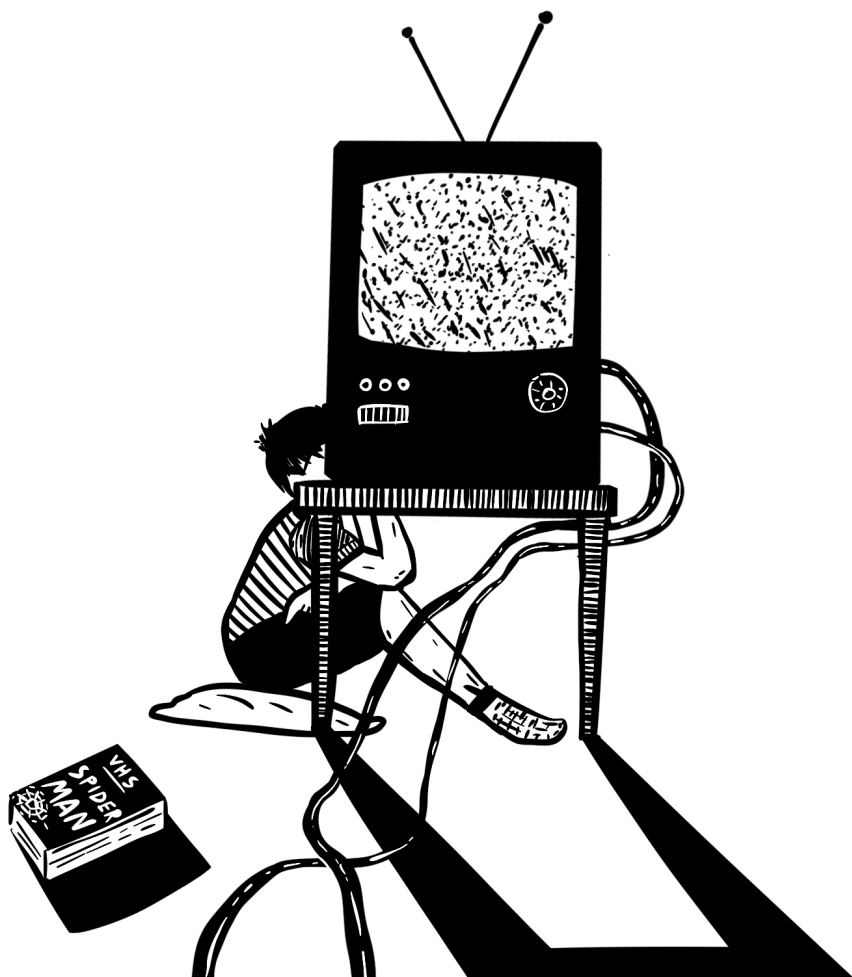
Let's go back to the so-called beginning.

WHO THE **** AM I?

Once upon a time, there was a dreamer.

As a young boy, I would make up elaborate fantasies in my head and sometimes walked straight into lamp posts because I wasn't paying attention to my surroundings. Remembering what my parents had told me about pointy objects, I pointed at churches and said, "don't touch, sharp". Mostly, I played things safe, but I did whatever I wanted inside the boundaries of the rules. That meant I wasn't doing anything dangerous, but if a teacher wanted me to draw with blue I would go for black. Early on, I disliked being told how to think, and still do. As a toddler, I wasn't always watching cartoons with the rest of my siblings, instead, my parents would find me playing with the cables behind the TV. If you don't know me well enough I may seem pretentious, and maybe I am, but I'm not trying to be. The only time that I felt weird or different from other people is when someone pointed it out to me. Spontaneity and intuition has long been my style, which has led to many chance meetings and my life has unfolded in a very special way. I've learned three languages by living in foreign countries, biked from Sweden to Norway without money, a map or a smartphone, and at 18, I sold everything I own (including my bed). Imagine a room with nothing but a few pieces of clothing and a passport. For you to understand why I did the most stupid

thing I've ever done, I think you first need to gain an instinctual understanding of how my mind works.



LIKE A VIRGIN

We weren't happy together. But because neither wanted to say it first, we pretended that things were fine. At age 23, while traveling in Southeast Asia together, it became difficult to hold the fabric of our relationship together and fights were frequent. Our needs were different and communication broke down between us. We sat at a gloomy café in Thailand in silence. Finally, I uttered the mood-killing words, "I... think... we should break up." and Bim agreed. We cried together, but eventually, the tears turned into laughter and relief.

"So, is that it then?" she asked.

"I guess so," I replied.

"Haha, well okay then. Good."

As we checked into a hotel room for one last night, the receptionist greeted us and wrote down our details in a huge, Bible-like book. I'd never seen a hotel that didn't use booking software before. We slept in a claustrophobic room trying to ignore the loud air conditioner, and in the morning, my alarm rang while she remained in bed. I packed my stuff into a green backpack, put on my Birkenstock sandals, and kissed what was now my ex-girlfriend goodbye. Cruising in a taxi to the airport surrounded by still darkness and rain gently tapping the window, my mind was somewhere else. Free to do whatever I wanted. A few weeks later I

was packing for a move to Amsterdam. It wasn't my first time there and I fell in love with the people, city canals and relaxed vibe. I spent my last savings on a bartending course that included accommodation for a month. All good—something to do and somewhere to live. Excited to start my new life as a bartender, I studied hard and tried to bond with the other students, but after two weeks it was clear that I was failing the course. The pressure of performing made me fall back into depression, something I've lived with for most of my life. I started spending most of my days laying in bed feeling useless, and no one really understood what I was going through except fellow student Dave. He smoked weed and drank alcohol every day, acting goofy and stupid, but somehow still outperformed everyone in the course. Something didn't add up, and I could tell there were more layers to this guy. The instructors insisted that I learn how to juggle bottles and show off to customers with a range of different tricks, even grading my performance. This wasn't my style and I retreated into myself. Sharing stories and listening to people was the kind of bartender I wanted to be. I do everything my way, even bartending it seems. So what do you think, did I finish studying?



Unsure what to do, I reached out to Irene, a girl that I had dated briefly in Amsterdam a few years earlier. She wasn't a big fan of mine because I had left her suddenly, but we still met up and had some drinks and watched an Icelandic rapper perform in a bar. Coincidentally, I had met him a few years ago when I backpacked in Iceland and had drinks with him and his friends at someone's house. I remember that he wasn't established back then, but he showed me one of his unfinished songs and I encouraged him while his friends said he would never be successful. His name was Gaukur (or GKR) and he did eventually make it as an artist. Irene kissed me at the end of the night and told me, "you're sleeping at my place". I didn't argue. We didn't have sex, thankfully, but in the morning it was clear she regretted pursuing me at all. Soon after, she told me not to contact her again, but she still put me in touch with a hotel that was looking for a receptionist. A funky, cool place called Generator with mostly younger people visiting. I made the interviewers laugh and we ended up talking more about Scandinavian nature than my resume. Good. Resumes are boring. Finally, I was no longer a bartender and my manager didn't control me or tell me how to talk to guests. Most of the time I ignored the queue of people and spent time with every person to understand their needs and personalities, and I learned words from their language. I had fun.

One day, Evi, a girl from the hotel café asked me to join her and some friends at a small get-together. To my surprise, I was offered

drugs when I arrived at the apartment. Small flakes of MDMA were mixed with water and downed like a vodka shot. I understood from the vibe that this wasn't unusual.

“Do you want some, Thomas?”

I had questions.

“What does it feel like?”

“What are the side effects?”

“Will I become an addict?”

All my questions were answered with amusement and it seemed harmless enough. I didn't want to be the boring guy at the party, so I agreed to try some. Not long after, I was grinding and biting my teeth, and I asked them if there was a connection to the drugs.

Yeah. They forgot to mention that side-effect. When the MDMA kicked in, I felt loving and calm but also *~zoned the fuck out~*. Participating in the conversation was increasingly difficult as I floated around in my headspace. The host let me sleep on their floor that night and I groggily went to work the day after, still slightly loved up.

z z z z



Months passed without any more drug use until two friends asked me to join them in taking some good ol' LSD. That sounded serious. I'd heard of LSD as a drug that melts your brain, and I really don't like my brain melting if it can be avoided. It's so inconvenient.

We did the same dance of questions and answers.

“There are no death cases. It's not addictive. And we'll only take a small dose. Don't worry.”

I was there with a girl and a boy. The girl had never tried it, but the guy was experienced, and we trusted him. He was a bit crazy though, which we noticed when the sofa started vibrating. He had opened it up and installed speakers into the seats, blasting music into our inexperienced asses. A movie projector beamed Rick and Morty into the ceiling and we lay there laughing most of the night.

Woken by horny birds and sunshine peeking through the heavy curtains, that was my signal to go home. Both my friends were still asleep and I didn't feel like waiting for them to wake up, so I snuck out.

For as long as I can remember, I've been depressed. It's affected every part of my life, but most of all my relationships. Someone

once asked me, “what do you have to be depressed about?” but that question is too simple. You’re revisiting the same negative thought patterns over and over. You feel a heavy weight, and every day, it’s like walking the same path. Eventually, the road you’re walking on gets dirty, unreliable and even dangerous. No one ever comes to repair it, and it’s impossible to walk on other roads because they’re too far away. That’s the depressed mind. And growing up wasn’t without difficulty as I was bullied by other kids. Beaten regularly in the stomach with full force, pushed head first into the snow and excluded from games. When I started making anything that resembled friends in school I was already 16 years old, and even they were manipulative and took advantage of my insecurity. One of them would torment me by staring into my eyes, saying that everyone hated me, then seconds later he’d laugh and tell me it was only a joke, followed by staring again and reaffirming that, “no, everyone does hate you, Thomas. If you disappeared, no one would miss you”. He went back and forth between affirming and destroying me, probably because he enjoyed breaking my spirit. But I accepted these “friends” who beat and hurt me regardless. I didn’t have anyone else. I don’t think my parents knew how to handle the bullying, and to a large degree weren’t aware of it. I stopped telling adults what was going on because I would get pulled into meetings with teachers to discuss what I was doing wrong and was rarely protected from the abuse. One teacher told me that I should lighten up and stop

holding grudges. Psychological or even physical symptoms of illness were never taken seriously in my family. “That will sort itself out” was the motto, no matter what the problem was. Usually, small things did take care of themselves, but psychological trauma manifested itself deeper. I don’t blame my parents, maybe it sounds that way, but I’m only explaining my experience. They come from a different generation which ignored mental illness and never complained. It’s understandable, because the people who were noticeably different were sometimes locked up. It wasn’t until I moved away from our childhood home that I started believing that I am depressed. Before that, I didn’t mention it because I wasn’t sure anyone would take me seriously. I kept choo-chooing like Thomas the Tank Engine, and over the years, many people gave me useless advice. Drink more water, get some sunlight and exercise. Because this works on a non-depressed person, the assumption is that it works on everyone. But for us to recover we need to stop walking down the same path and teach ourselves to think in new ways. It takes years, and it takes energy. Something we don’t have a lot of.

But here I was, buzzing from the comedown of LSD, and as I walked to the subway, I felt different. The veil of darkness had started to lift. I was filled with cheery optimism and even ordinary things felt like an extraordinary experience. As my mind explored new ideas, I could feel my brain moving around. The next few months were spent doing intense research about how psyche-

delics affect the brain. When I find something that I'm interested in, I dive into it and learn as much as I can. At first, I look at the overview of the topic and slowly go more into detail until I feel that I've satisfied the itch. What I uncovered blew my mind. LSD connects parts of the brain that usually never communicate, and because of that, it can undo depressive pathways within hours. LSD can make you more creative and less depressed. Damn.

So I did what any normal person would do.

Okay, maybe I don't know what normal people do.

But I did something for the first time, like a virgin...



Someone once told me that the drug trade in Amsterdam is the most efficient business in the world. Text a number what you want and where you live and your drugs arrive within 15-20 minutes on a scooter. Cash only. Drop-off happens inside your building. They're even polite. I paid him and went upstairs to the awful room I was renting with 5 tabs of LSD in my pocket. The walls had paint traces in red, orange, blue and white. Nothing matched. Music travelled through apartments and my neighbour would hear as much as I did, which meant no techno for me. In the bathroom, a disgusting colony of flies lived there permanently. When I moved in, my roommate told me his rules: no drugs, no alcohol, no parties. Unsurprisingly, we didn't quite click. But for some reason, he still insisted on hanging out now and then. I hid most of my lifestyle from him because finding an apartment in Amsterdam is near impossible. On this evening, he was away and I decided to change my name to Alice and take the journey into Wonderland. But how exactly do you prepare? Say a prayer to God? Well, I'm not religious. Text my friends that I love them, just in case something happens? Too dramatic. Maybe... ah, you get the idea. Why do I always have to give a million examples? The point is, I was inexperienced and nervous, but my best guess for how to prepare turned out to be pretty good. I filled my fridge with easy-to-eat food (soy-yoghurt) and made sure I had dimmed lights, a good music playlist and a blanket. The LSD itself came in 5 connected tabs, like 1 centimetre long

train tickets. I looked at the intricate and colourful patterns and split one of them from the rest, hesitating for a moment that felt like an eternity. Every second was bringing me closer to a life-changing decision. There was still time to go back. No... I had gone to all the trouble, now was the time. I put the tab on my tongue until it dissolved and I waited without any expectations. Last time was such a small dose that I didn't really know what LSD was like, and at first, nothing happened. Did he sell me fancy-looking paper? A few minutes later the air around me started to vibrate and hum. It kicked in more and more until I was fully engaged in a psychedelic experience. In the movies they make you believe that you'll see elephants dressed as clowns or other insane hallucinations. It was way more subtle. I expected it to change *what* I see—instead, it changed *how* I see. My eyes fixated on my hands and while they still looked normal, they were now a source of fascination. They became the most important things in the world.

“Why don't I appreciate my hands more? They help me with everything. I say hello, I dance and pick things up. They are me. I love them.”



I stared in slow motion, and unlike with MDMA, I was still there. Every feeling and thought that passed through me was an elevated layer of consciousness. I dangled my legs from the bed feeling electricity surge through me. Confidence, strength and self-belief filled the room. I moved my hands around, slowly, watching, letting my observation of myself be just as much a part of the dance as the dance itself. It was pleasant and creative. Layers of my identity started stripping away and revealed to me how tightly wound I had been. Throughout life, we add complex ideas to our identities to protect ourselves, but rarely take the time to remove things. How often do we consider whether an opinion or part of our identity is helping us? I became a child again. Not in the sense of being helpless or naïve, but in being able to look at the world with new eyes, uninterested in proving my point or being the smartest in the room. My heavy armour was gone. A typical trip can last for about 16 hours, and at the very peak, it's difficult to gain any wisdom. But towards the end, I went into what I describe as "the philosopher's mind". If you've ever stared at the stars until 3 in the morning wondering about the mysteries of the Universe, then you know that humbling feeling. I picked up my pen and started writing, consciousness dripping into words. This was the opposite of writer's block and ideas came naturally. Some thoughts were useful while others were playful. If I were sober, I would be overthinking and doubting my writing ability, but I had no hesitation.

- BE COMFORTABLE LETTING THINGS GO.
- BE COMFORTABLE BEING MISUNDERSTOOD.
- BE COMFORTABLE WAITING.
- USE QUESTIONS TO MAKE A POINT, NOT STATEMENTS.
- SEX IS ONLY EVER IMPLIED.
DON'T ADD IT.
- THERE ARE NO GAMES TO MAKE PEOPLE LIKE YOU.



**“THE MORE YOU QUESTION YOURSELF
AS AS A SOURCE OF LOVE,
THE MORE PEOPLE WILL REJECT
YOU FOR LOVE.”**



EVELINA

I became the best version of myself. Calm, comfortable and more intuitive. People behaved differently around me, and I noticed.

One day I was drinking coffee, minding my own business when a German woman came up to my table to tell me I looked so peaceful. She asked what my secret was and shared with me that even though she's a psychologist, she had no idea how to make herself happy. This was one of many similar experiences. Where before I had been the shy guy, now friends and strangers thought of me as a point of safety. I would be lying if I said it didn't go to my head, but I wasn't completely comfortable with the attention either. People wanted advice for their specific situations, but I couldn't do much for them.



I leaned into the attention and spent most of my free time having sex, taking Ecstasy and going to dimly-lit techno parties that lasted several days. My friend Tamara introduced me to De School which quickly became my favourite place to go. It was a school building converted into an industrial techno club, with different DJs playing in every classroom. One evening, me and another friend, Martina, stood by the wardrobe area when I spotted a cute girl standing a few meters away. I thought to myself, “I wish I could meet her, she looks cool”, and almost immediately the opportunity presented itself. She walked over to the cigarette machine and struggled to make it work, so me and Martina helped her out and discovered she was there alone. We invited her to dance with us. That’s how I met Evelina, an experimental music artist. On the dance floor, I decided to go for it and kissed Evelina, then Martina and then both. When Evelina later went home, Martina took her shirt off and danced topless, which isn’t uncommon in these types of clubs. We felt each other’s bodies and kept making out. After this night, I didn’t continue being intimate with my friend Martina, but Evelina and I started to hang out more often. She inspired me with her unique type of creativity, and we met hung out more and more. At a warehouse party, we took MDMA and when the dancing got tiring I asked if we should sit down and I led us to a small seat. We could still see the party from there but it was nice to be able to talk.

“I really like hanging out with you, you’re so cool. I’m glad we became friends,” I told her.

“Yes! Me too. But maybe we could be... more than friends?” she replied.

“...you want me to be your boyfriend?”

“Oh, was it that obvious that’s what I meant? I thought I was discrete,”

I don’t know why she thought it could be interpreted any other way, so I laughed.

“I would love to be your boyfriend. But I need to be honest with you, I’m only interested in an open relationship right now. How do you feel about that?”

“I guess we can try. I’ve never had an open relationship before,” she replied.

That night we slept at Evelina’s place as a couple. Her room was covered in quirky photographs and magazines. At another time in a techno club together (yes it’s a lot of techno at this point in my life), we sat in a quiet area again, talking about confidence and sexual expression. We talked about the fact that people were topless here (men and women) and that she wanted to try too, but some fear was holding her back. Surrounded by smoke and dim lights, I gently encouraged her. She took her top off and eventually removed her hands covering her breasts and danced slowly

around me, gaining more confidence every minute. It wasn't about getting attention from anyone or turning me on; it was a beautiful moment of self-expression. I took her by the hand and walked with her to the middle of the dance floor and we both danced without shirts on, nipples out and fearless. No one bothered us, and it was awesome.

LUNA

I started my working day in the hotel reception as usual. Around 11 o'clock I would print out a list of people checking out and go door by door. It felt dirty to wake up weary travellers still hungover from yesterday, but new guests were checking in soon. I reached the second floor and for the first time on my rounds, I met someone. I was walking through a long corridor when I spotted a girl around my age sitting on the floor. Something about her relaxing in this unusual place spoke to me, so I sat next to her and had a brief conversation. The situation was strange enough that it broke the everyday spell for me, there was a realness there.



We exchanged contact details but didn't meet up as she left the country soon after, but we texted. She revealed to me that she was determined to commit suicide in exactly two weeks. I didn't know how to respond. Maybe this was the connection I felt in the corridor? She had nothing to lose, so there was a sort of vulnerability. My caretaker instincts kicked in. I asked her to fly back and stay a week in Amsterdam in my apartment, and surprisingly she accepted.

On arrival, she went out to buy Space Cake (psychedelic THC), which she got high on during the days when I worked. In the evenings we hung out and she'd tell me about roaming around the city alone, being so high she didn't know where she was anymore, sometimes even walking in front of traffic. Her behaviour was problematic and scared me, but I promised myself one thing. Whatever happens this week, I will not judge, control or request anything. I will create a safe space. We shared a bed that week, but for me, this was not sexual or romantic. We went out to De School one night to dance to techno. MDMA was taken by both of us, which usually makes people feel good, but you should understand that traumatised people respond to MDMA differently. Sometimes the unprocessed emotions can come up, forcing you to deal with pain. I thought we would dance that night, but instead we sat together in a secluded part of the club without music for about 6-8 hours and I listened to her talk about her problems. I don't think she knew how draining this was for me, but I re-

membered my promise and endured, knowing that my needs were nothing in comparison to hers right now. Towards the end of the drug trip, she started opening up to me about a fear that she was holding inside.

“I’m afraid you just want sex from me, and I don’t want sex,” she said.

“Don’t worry, I have enough sex. That’s not why I invited you,” I replied.

“Why didn’t you tell me earlier? You should have told me. I was thinking about that the whole time,”

I was afraid she wouldn’t believe me if I said that I didn’t want sex, so I just never mentioned it. Many guys will throw that statement out there as a creepy tactic to get close to women, but not actually mean it. In this case, her not knowing what my real intentions were heightened her anxiety. I should have told her earlier.

When she flew back home, I wasn’t convinced I had done any good. This was one of the first times I tried to help someone like this and did it without giving any advice. Doing “nothing” is a hard thing, but in this case I think all she needed was someone to listen to her.

She did not commit suicide. But whether I helped her or not is something only she can answer.

JULIA

With a new intuition about depression, I started to recognise people in distress more quickly. Some part of me wanted to help everyone I met. One day a woman called Julia came to my reception, immediately sassy and angry. She took out her frustrations on me and complained about various things. Usually, when guests did this I would defend myself. But with her, I somehow knew that it wasn't personal. I was patient and listened and slowly she became calmer. More than anything she didn't want to share a room with anyone (most of our rooms were shared bunks) and asked if it was possible to move to a private room. We didn't have any available. But like with Luna, I recognised an emergency and my caretaker spirit took over.

“Julia, we don't have any rooms for you. But I can arrange the guests in the system so that everyone is put in other rooms instead of yours. I can't guarantee that someone working the shift after me won't put someone in your room, especially if we get fully booked, but I'll do my best to keep it empty,”

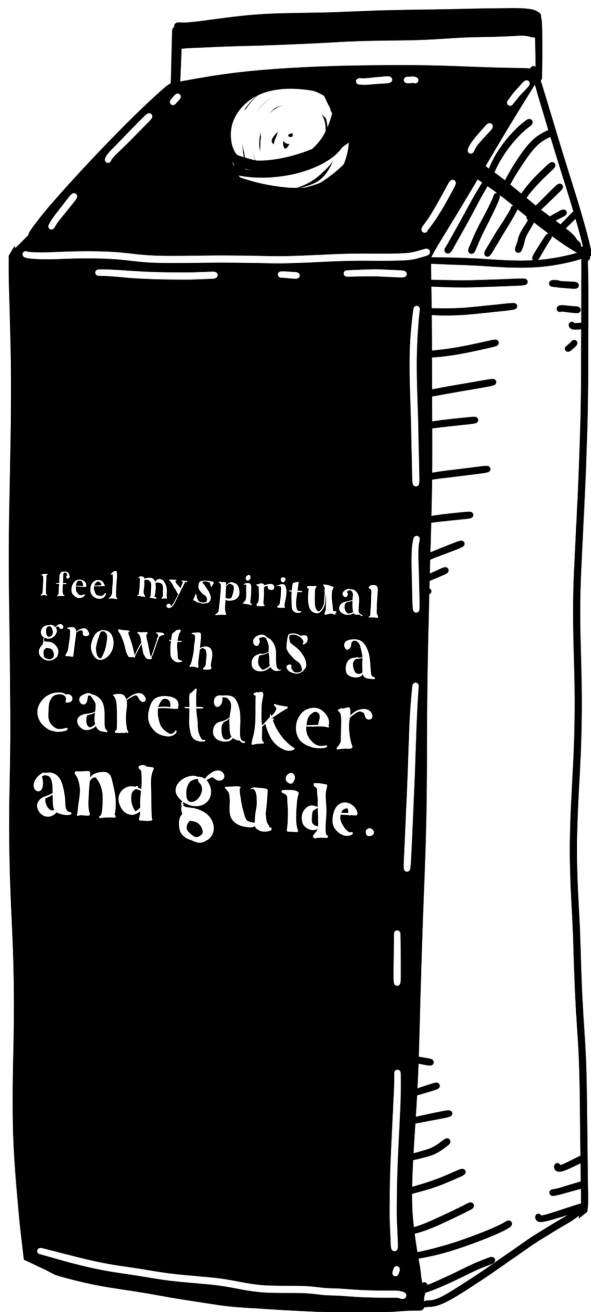
She hadn't paid for a private room and had no right to one, but every morning that I came to work I moved heaven and earth to empty the room for Julia. It wasn't possible every day, but I tried.

I had no clue how much of an impact I had on Julia until she texted me a few years later.

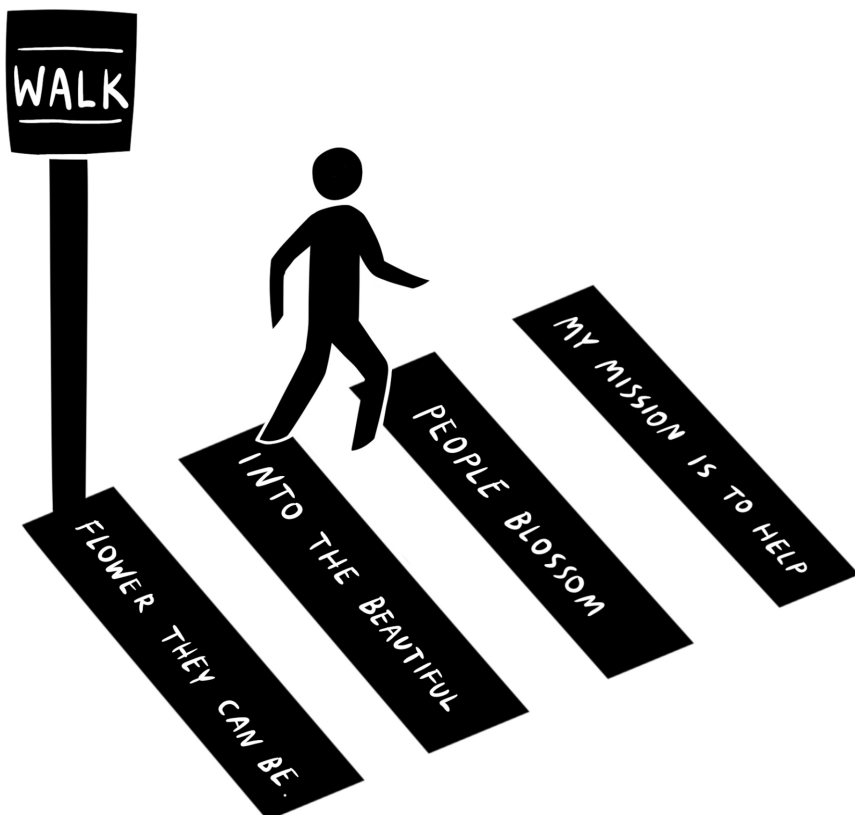
“I was the most depressed I had ever been when I met you at the hotel in Amsterdam, and your arranging I had the room to myself that first night was one the biggest reliefs you can imagine... (and your acceptance of my verbalizing of unhappiness)
So thank you.”

She lives in South Africa, but we still talk online occasionally.

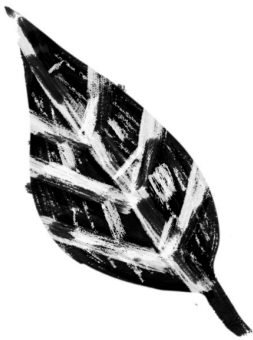
LSD lowers your defences, allowing you to empathise with people's true emotions. Anger is usually hiding a more profound unmet need, which was true of Julia. I found purpose in taking care of people, so on one LSD trip, I wrote a mission statement for my life.



I feel my spiritual
growth as a
caretaker
and guide.



Removing the
pain they've
felt and building
fresh leaves
of trust.



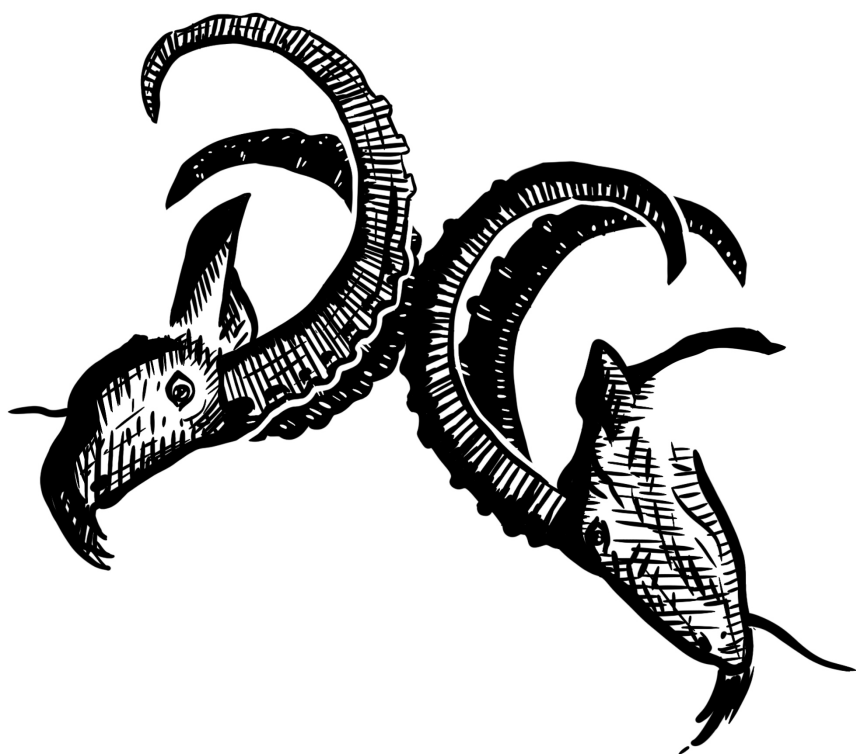
TAMARA

After a techno all-nighter with my friend Tamara, we went to her place to sleep like we had many times before. We were colleagues, and many people around us asked why we weren't a couple. On the surface, it was a perfect match. Both of us wore black clothes exclusively and loved techno, drugs and deep talks. But every time someone suggested that we should date each other, I felt weird. I understood that to outsiders, the idea of a man and a woman being close friends without sleeping together was difficult to understand, especially if they have a lot in common. At first, when we met at work, we didn't pay much attention to each other, but over time we bonded and became close. Not having an instant connection, but having to work for it and finally discovering that we do enjoy each other's company felt more special to me. When we arrived at her apartment, sweaty from dancing and still slightly drunk, Tamara excused herself to take a shower. After a few moments, I knocked on the door and asked, "Tamara, do you mind if I join you? Nothing sexual". She paused for a second before answering, "Yeah! Sure, why not". I undressed, stepped into the shower and we laughed at the situation. She started to put soap on my body and rub me clean, so I did the same. I rubbed her breasts, stomach and arms and then we both cleaned the soap off and went to sleep in her bed. Maybe it's impossible to imagine, but the whole situation was non-sexual for both of us. Because we had established trust, neither of us expected anything to escal-

ate. It was a humanising and playful experience, and afterwards, she thanked me for not making things weird. Of course, Tamara is a beautiful woman, and I thought about whether I would have the same situation with a male friend. And the answer is no, but as a straight man, I have been trained my whole life to not do anything that makes me seem like a homosexual. Who knows, if things were different maybe it wouldn't feel wrong, but I don't feel comfortable with it and that's a good enough reason not to. Even with women that I don't want to date, there is a certain chemistry that comes out of the energy interplay, and I can be attracted to a woman without wanting sex from her. Many women have told me they're traumatised from being relentlessly pursued by men that they never let their guard down. I don't blame them. But Tamara did something beautiful when she decided to believe me and let a friendship grow stronger in an unusual way.

I 'M SORRY, BROTHER

I continued taking LSD and it fed me with personal insights, philosophy and inner peace. Parts of my mind opened up and I connected the dots with things that I never would have noticed normally. For as long as I can remember I've been fighting with my older brother. From my perspective, he is a controlling sibling. Looking to guide me in what to wear, which music to pay attention to, what to study, which jobs to look for, how I should think, how I should feel and the list goes on. A master of giving unwanted and unnecessary advice, he has been triggering my anger for years. As soon as my rage is expressed, he claims he has no idea why I'm upset with him and once again I am the bad guy. Push, push, push, martyr. This was my view of my brother for as long as I can remember.



LSD allowed me to look past my trauma and see the reality of what was happening. It struck me that he believed he was being helpful. Regardless of our disagreements and the dysfunctional family dinners, behind all of that, was a genuine sense of care. Motivated by the duty of being a responsible guiding brother, the clash happened when this compassion met with the independence that is me. Pouring water on a raging fire and expecting flowers to bloom. After I understood that he wasn't trying to be an asshole, my second realisation was inevitable. If I wanted to repair our relationship, I would need to take a share of the responsibility. I felt innocent, but so did he. Reluctantly, I put my pride aside and I apologised to my brother for years of misunderstandings and committed to repairing our relationship with renewed trust. This was the most profound change in perspective that has ever occurred in my life, even if it didn't solve all our differences in the end.

THE BLACK HOLE OF SELF-HELP

Psychedelics give you what you're looking for. A party animal won't have many deep thoughts about their place in the Universe the same way a person who looks for wisdom is likely to find it. I didn't always have trust in my abilities—I wanted to write books, make art, be a creative influencer, spread ideas and be noticed, but I was afraid to try and fail. In the years before trying psychedelics, I never posted anything to Instagram, thinking, “who wants to see me talk? I'm no one”. But I tried a few times, usually videos of myself dancing to techno, and to my surprise, people liked the positive vibes. But I still felt like I needed more confidence to post more serious things. What does a person lacking this sense of self do? Naïvely, I tried to get it from other people. I read motivational quotes hoping that some greatness will rub off on me. Or surely, hanging out with cool people will transform me? The more I messaged people and tried to force social interactions, the further I got from being confident. Reading inspiring quotes only confirmed to my subconscious that I wasn't motivated. Because if I truly was, I wouldn't need to read that type of content anyway. The issue, of course, when you don't have it, is you think that you must get it from somewhere. You don't stop to consider that it may exist within you. That it can be nurtured. What psychedelics unlocked for me was the understanding that I'm the only person who has control over this body, personality and soul. If I want to be confident, **I need to be confident**. What does

that mean? I think of it as falling in love: you don't decide for it to happen, you allow it to happen by removing obstacles in your way.

Some useful questions I asked myself:

“What is it inside me that wants confidence?”

“Who decides whether I’m confident or not?”

“Can I think about this the opposite way?”

“What is holding me back? Specifically?”

I understood now that the person who wants to be confident is me. Therefore, I’m the only person who can create confidence, and I gave myself permission. Suddenly, limitations felt imaginary and out came poetry, insights, drawings and better relationships with people. I became playful.

When I meditated on where confidence comes from, I had a vision of laying bricks. It struck me that if I haven’t created anything or had any meaningful connections in the last years, there’s no foundation. Every time I learn something, prioritise myself, improve at my job, make someone laugh, find a new friend or change someone’s life, there you go. Lay down a brick. With enough bricks, you soon have a building. A single brick is easily removed by criticism or rejection, but a house survives the storm. By looking within, I became a bricklayer.

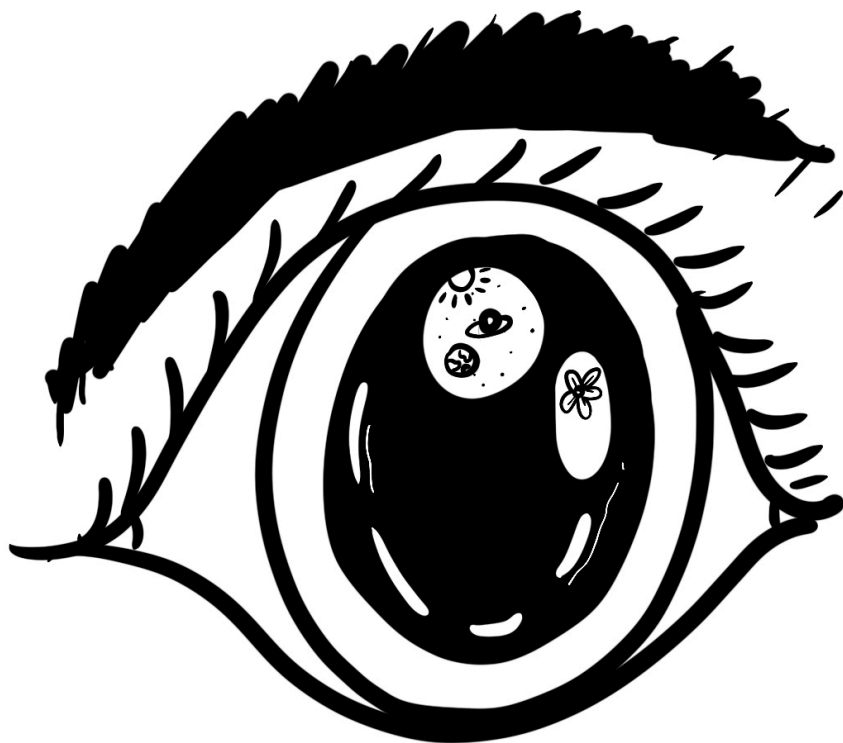
MY EGO DEATH

Curious to try other types of psychedelics, I bought magic mushrooms and turned the lights off in my room. I ate the mushroom, which tasted sour and old, and closed my eyes. I didn't expect to have an ego death that day, but I did. While LSD had shown me glimpses of looking past my ego to improve life, this was something different. The concept of myself as a person disappeared, to where I wasn't able to remember what it meant anymore, "me, a person?". It felt ridiculous. I merged with my surroundings and became a manifestation of the Universe itself. Time didn't exist in this place, and all I saw were patterns of nature, animals and glowing lights.



The mushrooms took me by the hand and showed me the creation of everything by revealing the steps of evolution, at first showing me single-cell organisms and then more and more complicated animals and plants until finally, humans. I regained my sense of identity and I could feel myself switching between feeling male and female. The Universe told me it created life as a way of saying, “reality isn’t getting away with this existing shit anymore, it needs to be appreciated by someone”, and that we are the spectators of yin and yang. Two eternal forces fighting each other, both are equal, but still trying to win over the other. For most of the trip, I was saying, “what the fuck” out loud because of how intense the visions were. I saw all my friends as sources of light, and they were vastly different from each other. One person was a beacon of white light under icy blue water while another was bright and warm colours spread across the horizon. I looked out into my room and saw my soul in front of me, as a dark blue texture in the shape of a human. When the trip calmed down, I wrote a finishing thought in my journal.

“Challenges don’t require strength. They give strength and empower you to continue to grow and prosper.”



...WOW

CHRIS

My manager at work promised me career advancements if I did a good job, but when other people were promoted before me I realised they were never going to ask me. I quit the job and got a new job as a bartender in another hotel. I was terrible, for reasons mentioned earlier. Making cool drinks wasn't interesting to me, so I learned the basics of the menu but spent the rest of my time talking to guests. If the vibe was boring I would leave the bar, talk to every single person there and tell them there would be a dance battle in 5 minutes, eventually, everyone was talking together and having fun. One night, however, an Australian man came to my bar and tried to start a conversation. I didn't give him much back, but he sat in front of me, silently. Finally, I snapped out of it and decided to be honest with him.

“I'm really sorry, but I'm having a bad day. Usually I'm more friendly with my guests. Can I get you another beer?”

Chris liked my honesty and didn't mind that I wasn't entertaining him. We became friends and over the next few weeks, we talked about the music scene in Melbourne, relationships and everything else. He was upbeat and chatty, the way you'd expect an Australian to be. And he swore a lot, “ye fuckin' cunt!” being a common phrase. One day, he was sitting outside the hotel when

I came to work on my bike. I approached him to say hello, and when I was about 30 meters away I yelled to him, “what’s wrong?”. He paused for a second in disbelief, before asking,

“How the fuck did you know something was wrong?
How?”

“No idea, I just felt it,” I replied.

He went on to tell me that not even his closest friends had noticed anything different with him, and he had kept what had happened a secret from everyone.

“I was pretending like everything was fine, I wasn’t even gonna tell anyone, but you noticed straight away without me saying anything. How the fuck did you do that, Thomas?”

Someone had stolen his camera gear. On the memory cards were footage of a band he had been paid to film for the last three years. All gone in an instant and completely irreplaceable. My intuition at this time in my life was so accurate that I could pick up on slight changes in people’s moods. Usually, I couldn’t even explain how I knew these things, but I was able to see through the happy mask people wore and go straight to their pain. For some people, it was too much to handle, while others appreciated it and felt seen by me. Most people were confused because they didn’t know

they were giving off any signs in the first place, but for me, it was like a bright neon light in darkness.

KESTREL

I kept working at the hotel bar, spreading my good vibes and giving away a lot of free beer to people I liked. Don't tell anyone though. Only rarely were days quiet enough for me to spend time talking to people around the bar, and those moments were my best. On a night like this, a girl dressed in a pink rain jacket came running in, sweating and breathing heavily, sat down at my bar and demanded, "vodka, please!". It broke the silence and energy of the room in a way I hadn't expected. I poured the vodka for her, wondering why she needed it, but didn't ask. A conversation was started between her, myself and a few other people around the bar. We discussed feminism and found common ground. Long after the other guests had gone to bed, she was still there. Kestrel, a name I had never heard before, sat patiently while I cleaned and closed the bar and we chatted until about 5 in the morning, when finally I suggested, "do you want to check out of the hotel and sleep at my place instead?". She agreed, packed up her luggage and I ordered us a taxi. It was late, but when we arrived I lit some candles and put on slow music to set the mood. Kestrel took her jacket off and started doing yoga on the floor, dressed in a tank top and leggings. Seeing that made me happy because she seemed comfortable. Instinctively, I sat down behind her on the floor and gave her shoulders a light massage. Most likely, she perceived this as a "move", even though I wasn't expecting her to, because she wouldn't let me finish the massage. She

turned around to kiss me and we had sex to the music of “Cigarettes After Sex”, which was fitting. The next day, she was heading to Nijmegen, a small town in the Netherlands about 2 hours away by bus and train. She had moved from the United States to study there, and the course was starting today. I was ready to say goodbye, but just as I had plucked her from the hotel the day before, she teleported me from my reality when she announced, “you’re coming with me”. Am I? How nice. We travelled to Nijmegen and ended up at her University building for the introduction day, where all the new students walked around getting free stuff and saying hello to each other. Every time someone asked what I was studying I’d reply, “oh no, I’m just here with her. We met yesterday”, which left people even more confused, but we didn’t care. I took a free Radboud University hoodie that I wore often afterwards. We slept the night at her student housing, a place none of us had ever seen before that day, and in the morning I went home again. Soon after she came to visit me in Amsterdam and we started an open relationship. Something about the sex together was magical in a way I hadn’t felt before, as if our souls merged into one. We were two weirdos and met at a time when we both were exploring the limits of our identities. Together we became an energy bomb. The relationship didn’t last for longer than a few months, but the few moments we shared are difficult to describe. It was spiritual.



MANUELA

Not every sexual experience was pleasant. I matched with Manuela on Tinder and met up at her place with the subtext of hooking up. She had a fireplace which we sat in front of, with a glass of red wine and she rested her back against my stomach. I reached down to touch her breasts and it escalated quickly. She told me afterwards that she too had open relationships and enjoyed having casual sex, something we bonded over. We talked about how limiting it can be to stay with one partner because different people can fulfil different needs, and how people can get jealous and possessive when they have a monogamous relationship. She was from Romania and studied fashion design, and to me she seemed fun and I considered meeting her again. We fell asleep in her bed and I went deep into dreamland when suddenly I got woken up by her teeth digging into my neck, seemingly trying to draw blood. I look her in the eyes with her body threateningly on top of mine and ask what she's doing, to which she replies, "I'm a vampire, I drink blood". Who knows, maybe I met a real vampire that night? She was from Romania after all. I was creeped out, left, and we didn't keep in touch.

ASEXUAL ENERGY

For the first time in my life, women actively pursued me and it made me feel on top of the world. But as an introvert at heart, it was doomed from the start (hey, that rhymes!). I wanted to listen to and empathise with people's problems, but not everyone returned the favour. Emotionally, I felt sucked dry, with nothing left to give, and didn't allow myself enough alone time to recover. Eventually, I crashed and broke off every sexual and romantic relationship I had started. Looking back, it wasn't handled in the best way. From the start, I should have taken my needs more seriously to build healthier relationships. But I was young, stupid and dramatic and everything went from 100 to 0 in a few days. I kept in touch with partners as friends, but stopped having sex entirely.

HAHA, REMEMBER WHEN I DIED?

The brain immediately creates a tolerance to psychedelics after using them, which wears off after 2 weeks. I took this as a recommendation to take LSD or Mushrooms every two weeks. I became loud and cocky and told everyone how LSD cures depression and I felt like an expert. I believed my hype and didn't take time to recover from my trips. When you gain insights about your mind, it changes the person experiencing the insight, and it's your job while sober to reintegrate this wisdom into your life. Surprisingly, learning useful things about yourself too fast is traumatic and can lead to an identity crisis, "who am I?".

In one of my sessions I took an LSD tab with ~10x the dose I was used to. Of course, it wasn't my intention to mega-dose, I guess the drug lab fucked up their production. Within minutes I knew something was wrong. I texted a group chat of friends that I was worried about it, but they assured me everything was okay. They were working and couldn't come meet me. "I have about 5 minutes before I'm not able to ask for help anymore" flashed into my mind. In dangerous situations, I'm usually clear on what actions to take. I don't freeze, I do what's necessary. I put my phone, wallet and keys in my pocket, stepped into the street outside my building completely barefoot and asked the first people I saw to please call me an ambulance. Already in that short timespan, I couldn't use or understand my phone anymore. I fell

to my knees, overwhelmed with the intensity. One of my friends, Jossin, saw my message from earlier and biked as fast as he could to my house, arriving just in time to join me in the ambulance. They gave me a sedative to calm down because I kept saying that I was going to die if they didn't help me. The ambulance staff rolled their eyes at me. In the hospital, the doctor tried to talk to me in Dutch, but the whole room looked like smoke and I couldn't use a foreign language in this state of mind. I remember thinking, "I understand this doctor on 5 different levels of consciousness". On the surface level, she was a doctor with professional behaviours, but underneath, I saw the human. I theorised that she thought my trip was interesting and I perceived not only what she was presenting to me but also what she wasn't. Who knows how correct I was, but I believed I could see straight into her soul. Despite not being able to form a normal sentence in reply to her questions, I felt highly aware of the situation.

"Thomas, now that you've had this experience, you are more likely to develop a psychosis next time. Don't take any more drugs," she said.



My friend Jossin left. The doctor checked my heart and told me I have a heart condition that may need to be treated one day. Fuck. But because LSD isn't lethal they let me go home, despite being the highest I've ever been. How high was I? Well, when they sent me on my way, I walked barefoot through the hospital unable to figure out how the doors worked. I looked for handles, buttons and sensors. Nothing. The doors were a puzzle and I was trapped. I walked around stupidly looking for someone to open it for me and then took the metro home. I for sure looked out of place wearing sweatpants and no shoes. A normal trip will take around 16 hours to come down from, but this time I was high for 32 hours. The last hours were awful, all I wanted to do was sleep, but the psychedelics had other plans for me. In the following weeks, the doctor's words rang in my ear, "you're more likely to have a psychosis now".



I didn't even know what a psychosis was, but I didn't want to let that define me. I was determined to get back on the horse. To not be afraid and live my life.

Some time passed, and again I took Mushrooms. Around 10 grams, which is a lot more than people usually take. Yes, I am an idiot. I remember being hunched over on my bed, staring at the wooden floor and observing the natural grains in it. The drug was making the pattern move around like tiny ants, and I was trying to force myself to see it clearly. Pushing my mind to experience the wood as if I were sober. It was meant as a fun experiment to find out if I could pause a trip by thinking about it, but the act of trying to control my experience sent me into a dark spiral. With a surge of energy as if a demon had taken possession of me, I sat straight up, my head went to the ceiling, and I whispered, "there's someone else here". As soon as I had spoken those words, I freaked out. "Someone else is here? What the hell, what does that mean?", my mind split into pieces and it felt like I had a thousand eyes to look through, and somehow I wasn't there. While I was still in control over my actions, the "I" was pushed into a back room in my mind. The world around me felt fake and I dissociated. When everything feels non-real, including yourself and your body, there is no guardrail to hold on to. You're falling through cold space. All I could do to keep calm was to pace the room back and forth saying, "it's going to be fine, it's going to be fine", like a

crazy person. My sense of identity was stripped away and any defences I had against the world disappeared for good.

My calm nature, gone.

My perspectives, gone.

My safety, gone.

My confidence, gone.

My plans for the future, gone.

The self, gone.

My social intuition, gone.

My will to live, gone.

Explaining why it happened this way, and why I couldn't just "shake out of it" is difficult. You have to experience it to know. Imagine looking in the mirror and wondering who is looking back at you, but then also questioning who is asking the question in the first place, times a thousand until you feel sick. I can't say for sure if this was a psychosis, a bad trip or something completely different, but I heard the message.

SLOW
DOWN,
OLD BOY.

THE MANIPULATOR

I stubbornly stayed in Amsterdam, thinking that if I could hide and ignore my symptoms for long enough, things would be normal again. I started a new job as a waiter, something I'm normally good at, but this time I did poorly. My colleagues and my bosses were trying their best to be supportive, but at the same time, I was letting people leave without paying their bills and often forgot important things. I never told them what I was going through. I was 18 years old, starting my first job again without any skills or confidence, or that's how it felt, and it embarrassed me. All day long I had to speak Dutch to customers, a language I had learned in the last two years but not mastered. The job exhausted me even more, but it was a good distraction. Every evening I returned to my bed, which reminded me of my psychosis, and I would have a full-blown panic attack. I thought about the heart condition the doctor had told me about which made me think my panic attacks were my body shutting down and dying.

I got a new colleague at the restaurant, let's call him Ash. He had plenty of charisma, and both colleagues and guests enjoyed his presence. He was playful in his approach. Everyone wore black uniforms while he would show up with a shirt made out of glitter, and managers didn't tell him what to do because he emanated an energy that said, "I know what I'm doing". Over time, however, I noticed his darkness. When we closed each night, we

would clean the restaurant, count the money, and then sit down in the middle of the restaurant to have some closing drinks. This was a time for casual conversation, discussing crazy guests and getting to know each other. One night, we were sitting there talking when one of our bartenders, who is quite confident in his abilities, was saying how well the day went and how he made almost zero mistakes. If you observed this bartender during the day you'd see that he loves his job and glows with confidence. Ash listened to him talk, and then made a subtle comment, "it's obvious that you have some things to learn, you're still making a lot of mistakes". He didn't elaborate on what those mistakes were, and he didn't need to. The damage was done. The bartender nodded and his body language changed from confident to defeated. The comment was innocent enough that no one around the table noticed what was going on, but my alarm bells went off. I believed the intention behind the comment was to lower the bartender's confidence and to raise Ash's status, and his timing was too odd to be a coincidence. Why would you criticise someone right after they've expressed confidence? I looked at Ash, and he looked back at me, suddenly aware that I knew something I wasn't supposed to. More subtle attacks happened over the coming weeks, but what changed was that Ash, who had not given me much attention before, became desperate to win me over. He invited me to techno clubs, talked about personal things and introduced me to people. I was still careful with him. But I did tell him I was strug-

gling to feel sexual anymore, even wondering whether I'm asexual. When I looked at an attractive woman, I wasn't thinking, "I want to hook up with her", it was "I don't care if I have sex ever again".

"I think everyone feels that way sometimes. I don't always feel sexual and at some times in my life, I even felt disgusted by men who I'm usually attracted to. People think just because I'm openly gay, I can't question my sexuality anymore," he shared with me.

It wasn't a crazy statement, but hearing it was refreshing and helped me to accept my own questioning. I had never heard anyone say anything like that before. Most likely, all I needed was a break from sex and organically allowing myself to find things to be sexy again, without forcing it. Even though we bonded over this, one night after work, I confronted Ash about my suspicions. I told him, "I know what you're doing", and to my surprise, he didn't need me to explain what I meant. He admitted it.

"I have to be like this. Because I'm gay, people never took me seriously when I was younger and I was treated like I was nothing. So now I hurt people before they have a chance to do the same to me. It's a defence mechanism," he replied.

My fears were true. He was eroding people's confidence slowly enough that they didn't notice anything, and to me this was disturbing. "Are you a psychopath?" I asked directly. He didn't reply and instead started talking about all the times he had been hurt and disregarded as a child, but it felt rehearsed and his voice didn't change. There was no emotion, it felt like he was playing his get-out-of-jail card and manipulating emotions against me. I listened to him talk but didn't give anything back, just "mhm-hm" and "oh yeah?". Any attention he received was redirected into something negative, so I turned the tap off and stopped hanging out with him. I'm not sure if he was a psychopath, narcissist or just a broken person, but I do know he was strategically hurtful and self-serving. I've read somewhere that when an empath meets a psychopath, they will feel as if there's a predator in the room.

THERAPY IS FOR LOSERS

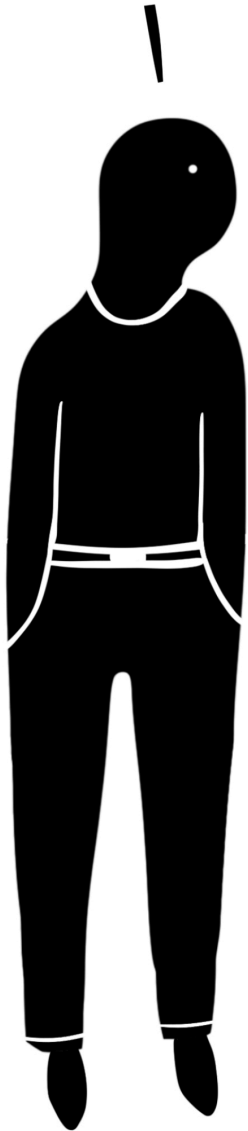
I avoided knives because I wasn't sure how much control I had over my mind. Was there a demon lurking behind the corner, waiting to tell me to kill myself in spectacular fashion? I endured this pain for about a month or two before sitting down with a heavy heart and admitting defeat. I mourned the person I had lost and cried. Things had become worse by not letting anyone in and I didn't have the tools to handle something like this. At my lowest point, I was finally open to accepting help. I quit my job immediately and turned down a job offer as a hotel supervisor I was waiting for (my first job in management). My colleagues thought I was going home to check my heart condition, a necessary half lie. I asked my family to forgive and love me. After an initial "what the fuck have you done?" they opened their arms. Family protects. My sister invited me to live with her and her two kids and within only a few days I was in Sweden again. The pain I felt was more than I've ever experienced, but having that safe space to recover and not worry about anything was wonderful. She didn't pressure me to be functional or explain myself, and it made all the difference. Her kids didn't understand that I was in pain, which meant that they treated me very normally and asked me to play with them. Having a reminder of the good in life gave me a perspective to hold on to in the dark moments.



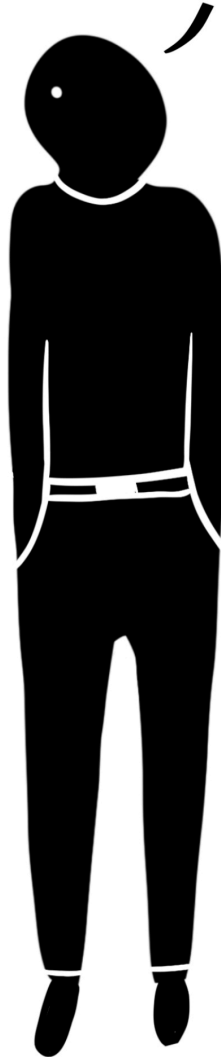
The time that followed was like a metamorphosis. In times of great identity change, it's possible to become physically ill because of the disconnect between who we think we are and who we are becoming. I slipped in and out of fevers and the flu for 3 months. I'd be feeling ok for a few days and then end up unwell again. Most nights I would wake up from nightmares where all I dreamed of was grey static. My mind must be broken, I thought, to not be able to have any normal dreams. I sweated so much in my night terrors that my bed started moulding and I got more sick from it until I noticed and threw it away. And then another mattress moulded. Finally, I got a mattress made out of latex which doesn't get mould. I slept all day and all night in the early days of recovery. More than anything, this period of my life was marked by debilitating fear. Having the lights off while in the bathtub would cause me to hallucinate things and wonder if I could trust myself. At any moment, I was expecting the "demon" to take over. Everything was terrifying to me, including me. I was a naked baby left out in the howling wind. Without any light at the end of the tunnel, I started to grow my hair long so that I could measure my progress in something physical. Eventually, I even went on a date, though mostly to prove to myself that I was recovering. We started talking every day for weeks until I told her about the psychosis. Very few people knew, even then, and she freaked out. Because of her little experience with drugs, she thought she was dating a drug addict and immediately left me.

That sharing my most intimate trauma with someone would cause them to run as fast as possible in the opposite direction hurt me more than I care to admit, but I reminded myself that no one right for me would ever do that. Soon after, she started dating someone who looked similar to me but was presumably more stable.

THERAPY.



WHAT?



While having a beer with two friends, I told them that I sometimes feel a lot of different emotions that I struggle to deal with, and one of them recommended going to a therapist. “A therapist?”, that made me angry with him. I told him that’s how I’ve always been and there’s nothing that needs to be worked out in therapy. I didn’t believe in that process or medicine because that’s only for broken people. Even then, I couldn’t fully admit that I was broken.

“I’m doing okay,” I told him. “I’m just an emotional person,”

“No,” he replied. “The feelings you’re having are not normal. You don’t need to be ashamed of talking to someone, a lot of people do it.”

I chewed on this for weeks, asking other friends if they agreed with him. I mean, how dare he say that to me? He might as well have said, “you need to be locked up because you’re a danger to society”.

Slowly, I reconsidered. It was a bitter pill to swallow, but deep down I knew it hurt me because there was a truth to what he said. He never begged or dragged me to therapy, it was my choice, but he did give me some tough love when he said, “you need to go, Thomas”. That’s exactly what I needed to hear. Thank you.

PSYCHOSIS IN WRITING

It took 6 months of therapy, writing down my traumas every day, and returning to an old job as a waiter (which I felt I could handle) for me to feel stable. Two years after the event I was mostly healed, but I never became the person I was before the psychosis. He is still dead, and the person who replaced him is stronger and more sensible. Many of my past insecurities are gone and I follow my passions fearlessly today. My father asked me if I would turn back time to do things differently, but I wouldn't. I learned so many unexpected things along the way. When I went back to my old job, sometimes I would walk onto the floor with three plates of food in my hands, surrounded by hundreds of guests when suddenly my psychotic symptoms would return. My body froze and the ground beneath my feet wobbled like an earthquake hit the city and everything was spinning. But while this would have scared me in the early days, I developed a new defence mechanism that worked pretty well. Whenever something like that happened, I would think to myself, "I don't care if the ground is shaking, I'm gonna keep going".

Where before I had been desperate to rid myself of any hallucinations, and was constantly measuring myself against last month to see how well I was doing, now I had gained some perspective. Those patterns were obsessive and unhealthy. In over-valuing the good experiences in my life, I was also over-valuing the negative

ones. That gave the hallucinations incredible power over my well-being. Something bad happens? Well, better feel like shit all week then. Something good happens? I'll cling on to it for dear life, because who knows when something good will ever happen again! When I detached myself from both sides of that thinking, I stopped caring so much about my mental state and I had moments of peace. I had retaken my power by using self-love and a little bit of detachment. The thing that got me into this trouble in the first place. Fate is not without a sense of irony.

1



2



3



YOU ARE NOT ENLIGHTENED

When I took psychedelics, I had about 2-3 ego deaths. Psychedelics dampen parts of your brain responsible for identity and self-protection while boosting creativity and empathy. But as soon as you're no longer high, your sense of identity crystallises again. Holding onto an ego death is like catching smoke with your bare hands. You can try, but your odds aren't great. The problem is, after experiencing such a mind-altering experience of being One with the Universe, it's extremely difficult to let go of it. Most people who experience it for the first time will form an even stronger ego straight after. How do you identify a psychedelic beginner? They'll say things like, "I'm so enlightened, and I feel sorry for everyone who isn't as enlightened as me!". I am no exception to this, but today I see it as a rite of passage for anyone who tries psychedelics.

The Journey of Ego Death

Step 1: Have an Ego death

Step 2: The ego forms again around this experience

Step 3: Tell everyone you're God

Step 4: Humbled by a difficult life event

Step 5: Realise you still have an ego

Step 6: Think of your ego death as a beautiful lesson, but not yours to hold onto

Step 7: Tell your story to young explorers

The ego is healthy. Without it, there's no identity or need to protect yourself. It is what helps us make sense of our place in the world. When psychedelics showed me life without ego, it wasn't telling me, "stay here forever", it was a reminder to be balanced and make decisions with more than just my pride. "Listen to people and don't assume you know everything", that's it. I didn't need to become Buddha.

I “died” that day, I’m sure of it.

Or maybe “changed” is a better word.

Do you want the secret now? Here it is. I wanted so badly to know the meaning of life that I got addicted to exploring my mind. I went full speed ahead to where I thought the golden fruit would be, desperate for knowledge, sex and social influence while ignoring the beautiful life in front of me.

I focused so much on what women thought of me that I forgot what I thought of myself, and I hurt some people in the process.

Today, I think ego death and deep insights are over-rated. Knowing yourself is useful, but there is often more immediate value in a cup of coffee with a good friend.

I ' M A D A N G E R O U S A R T I S T

I didn't understand the lessons at first, but I finally learned that I didn't need psychedelics to process life. They're beautiful, and I'm not anti-drugs by any means, but I'm also not pro-drugs. I do believe I was meant to go through this to crush my identity for something new to take its place. At the beginning of the book I was afraid to make my mark on the world, but today, there are no such fears. Making art helped me out of a dark hole, and I developed the courage to call myself an artist. I said fuck you to fear and quit my job to pursue art full-time, and you're reading one of those projects right now. The old me would have said, "I don't even know where to start!", but today I know that it doesn't matter.



Getting started is more important than the perfect plan, and having time to do the work is essential. Therefore, having a job is a good way to kill all your potential as an artist. Sharing my ideas and stories doesn't fill me with dread anymore, because I don't overvalue positive or negative experiences. Nor do I look for my value as a human being in what I produce or what people think of me. I embrace all of my weirdness, and there is a lot of it. The people who love me know that I'm not perfect, and the people who can't accept that are naturally pushed away.

I transformed from being a restless spirit into being a slightly calmer restless spirit. From Thomas to Tomo.

Now it's your turn to take what you learned from this book and go do something with it. Or not.

But most importantly: drink coffee with your friends.

ALL MY LSD INSIGHTS

The book is basically over now. But if you're still itching for more information then stick around. Here, I've put all my LSD insights in one place, it's mostly unedited and some of it may not make sense to you. Some of the insights are not useful to me anymore. But at the time they were life-changing. Enjoy.

- Sex is already implied, there's no need to add it to a conversation
- Use open statements that don't mean anything, let them fill in the gaps and find out what kind of person they are. Don't be judgmental.
- Make them feel good about who they are, whatever it is.
- Be comfortable being misunderstood,
- Be comfortable waiting
- Be comfortable to let it go
- Be comfortable to make a statement and wait for the other person to show interest. you aren't a dog :)
- Use questions instead of statements to make a point

Light is awareness. It brings focus to what we cannot see.

Dark is the same but turned inwards. It allows for healing and reflection.

MDMA makes you loving but it also just makes you fucking HIGH. Treat it as a high and be okay with the consequences. LSD is pure understanding of all beings. Love.

Sex is always implied. Always implied. Always implied. Get it in your head now or kill yourself. To grow you must realise this. Sex is always implied unless she escalates. Even then, be subtle about it. Never lose your values for a girl. she won't respect you for it and will lose interest. So you will have lost values for no reason. She doesn't want you to lose your values. Be yourself and wait for her, don't keep texting.

Don't always apologise for past behaviour, it reinforces that it's bad. It creates bad. Create good and let the old fade into nothing wispy smoke poofs.

When someone gives you a bad vibe, respond with positive. Wait for them to realise they are being weird. Don't make it hostile, so that they can continue the conversation with new interest.

There are no games for an attraction. No perfect liner will make someone like you. Evolutionarily we are made to be attracted to people because of their insights, values, love for self and others, and comfort. and a sprinkle of humour on top. Be okay with each other being silly. It's cute and lovely. Tell people they are lovely.

stop giving compliments
only about looks

You are so fucking shallow. It's time to be congruent. people's worth is not judged by how they look. If a girl asks you if you think they are pretty, reply that you don't have enough experience to judge them. or that you don't want to judge someone's attraction.

Compliment someone for being silly, or being open, for being spontaneous, for being brave, daring, for going against the flow, for sharing sensitive things. Always be sensitive. Be sensitive to hellos and good-byes. don't take them for granted. If someone says good night, they are wishing you a night of sweet dreams and no stress. It's a very nice thing. Wish it back. Add "too" to your greetings. "good night too" makes it seem like you are greeting together, not separately.

When someone tells you something they do isn't that good, tell them, "I'm sure someone likes it. Not everyone of course, but that's not what life is about".

About the deer (animal):

I like its careful nature, it knows it's beautiful but also knows how to avoid danger. It's quiet, treading through life without dis-

turbing anyone and it's curious. It values its family and will protect it with its life.

Think of yourself as a stream. other people have their stream. sometimes they will want to connect their stream to you, and sometimes they need to disconnect. That's okay. Let it happen. Let people drift in and out of your focus as they connect and disconnect from your stream. They will come to you when they need you, and not before.

Reject logic as a primary way of operating. Look at emotions, experiences and circumstances. This way you achieve true natural interactions; feelings are so powerful. You know this already of course.

This girl, she was kissing me very softly on my chest while we had sex, and it became very clear to me that I felt an enormous amount of sexual energy connected to my upper body and chest. It made me feel very sensual and attractive, and seeing how she felt comfortable around that part of my body made it even more intense. I didn't see it before but that is a very important channeling device for my sexual expression and self-love. All this from a one night stand.

Create feelings with your hands. Find your centre in your hands and chest. Create poetry for the masses. Approach your insecurities by making fun of them.

Depression is your mind saying, “fuck you! I’m tired of trying to be this thing”.

Everything is divine.

If you always look to the horizon for happiness, you’ll find a way to escape beauty.

A warrior is someone who lives with their pain. They use it to sharpen their blade. To become wiser.

Pain shows us the nature of all things. It is the window to let someone in, to change into something new.

It's how you feel at the base, the spine of all things, that will determine your health and balance.

If your core is not well-protected and loved, you cannot love others.

If you are not comfortable with the eternal spirit, the being, the moment of now, then you will find a struggle in everything, even things that don't struggle with you.

Nature doesn't resist.

Nature doesn't pull away.

Nature doesn't fight you.

Don't struggle.

Love is everywhere, people want to love.

But we create unnecessary obstacles.

By removing fear, all that can remain is love.

Go to what is alive.

Light your candle on them.

Become the fire that other candles are lit on.

Learn to control the intensity.

The only power people have over you is your own attention.

If a person insults you, take away your attention.

Then they have no power over you.

Give your attention to the people who love you.

That's when you can increase the intensity.

Burn a little bit faster for them.

“The snake which cannot shed its skin has to die.

As well the minds which are prevented from changing
their opinions; they cease to be mind.”

— Nietzsche

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